

Diocesan Council Meeting

All Saints Minot, ND

September 20-21, 2024

Present: Donna Pettit, Robert Fox, Robert Hoekstra, Kim Fox (Friday), Elsie Magnus, John Anderson, Mark Strobel, Beth Lipp, Rachel Schmidt, Bishop Brian Thom, Tammy Enockson, John Floberg, Jason Thoms, George Abdilnour, Leo Wilking, John Baird. *Guest: Bishop Todd Ousley*

Absent: Stephanie Garcia, Susan Lisok, Elaine McLaughlin and JoAnn Keehn

Friday September 20th @ 6:35 pm

Opening Business

- Bishop Brian opened the meeting welcoming everyone present including our guest, Todd Ousley.
- Chaplain John Floberg led the group in evening prayer
- Collectively Council read the Land Acknowledgment & Respectful Communication Guidelines
- Motion to approve the Minutes from the July 2024 meeting submitted by Tammy Enockson
 - *Moved by Robert Hoekstra; Elsie Magnus second*
 - *Motion passed*
- Bishop Brian introduced Todd Ousley and the topic of our discussion for the evening.
- Council members introduced themselves to Todd Ousley

Special Business: Initial Steps in Bishop Search

- Todd spent the next couple of hours discussing the normative practice for a Bishop election, the ways we can be creative with this process and the steps necessary to accomplish this before the formal process begins.
- The Council asked questions and discussed what the timeline might look like for the process given the time of year and the timing of our Convention etc.

Saturday September 21 @ 9:15 am

John Floberg, our Chaplain opened the meeting with prayer.

Jason Thoms agreed to be the recorder for this meeting.

Financials

- Bishop Brian reviewed the YTD Finance Report
 - Royalties are higher than an average year
 - The administrator's travel expenses are up since she moved. It was acknowledged by several in the room how vital her role is in the diocese.
 - Credit card processing fees are up the last two years. WoDakota donations contributed to this and it will be revisited.
 - Realm is an expense that has not proven to be useful for our context. Looking into a different platform.
 - Motion to accept the YTD Finance Report
 - *Moved by Robert Hoekstra; Donna Pettit second*
 - *Motion passed*

Miscellaneous Discussion

- There have been some bequests from the National church and Devil's Lake.
- The General Convention reorganized the medical trust.
- Amy Morrow will not continue as Diocesan Treasurer.

- We need a representative from the Finance Committee on Council once Robert Fox goes off of Standing Committee.
- Sustainability Grant name needs to be changed in our records.
- Looking to create a Policy Manual for Council to use for reference. An example for this manual would be how the Bakken fund is used in the budget.

Amended Budget Proposals

- Bishop Brian went thru the changes in the budget proposals presented by the Finance Committee that included A, B and C options for 2025 & 2026. Initial discussion included:
 - Could we hire someone to be a part time priest & missionary?
 - John Floberg presented a possibility that since Indigenous Ministry is dependent on a sustainable Diocesan structure we could make the case to use part of the Block Grant/Indigenous Ministry Grant for the diocese.
 - The Bishop's salary we are proposing is low in comparison to the median compensation for our diocesan classification.
 - The Finance Committee is recommending freezing DDS at 16% for 2025.
- Motion to adopt budget plan B for 2026 including the following:
 - Not accepting the Finance Committee's recommendation to freeze DSS.
 - Increase the Bishop's stipend to \$130,000
 - Address deficit in three ways
 1. Additional transfer from Trust & Endowment of 3% above the original 2%.
 2. Take \$30,000 of non-donor restricted funds from the Real Estate Fund.
 3. Take \$30,000 from EFMHE.
 - *Moved by Leo Wilking; John Baird second*
 - Discussion highlights:
 - Look into using the Block Grant for ministry beyond direct Indigenous Ministry.
 - Some liked and some opposed raising Bishop's salary.
 - Concerns about the sustainability of raising the withdrawal from the Trust & Endowment, however Leo Wilking clarified that the intention of the motion is not to increase the withdrawal for an extended period of time.
 - The reality of the cost of travel in this diocese.
 - Some questioned the need for a Diocesan Missioner position if we have a full time Bishop. Others concerned over who would serve the churches without a priest without a Diocesan Missioner. In response it was suggested raising up people within the diocese for leadership positions.
 - *Motion passed*
- Motion to investigate using \$50,000 of the Indigenous Grant that John Floberg identified and roll that into the 2026 budget.
 - *Moved by John Baird; Leo Wilking second*
 - *Motion passed*
- Motion to accept the Plan B 2025 Budget
 - *Moved by John Baird; Leo Wilking second*
 - *Motion passed with one opposed*

Lunch break

After Lunch Discussion

- There are dioceses that are moving to a 3 year rolling budget
- We need a plan on how we move into a sustainable financial situation after the larger draw from Trust & Endowment.
- Incomes Sources in the budget
 - A small percentage of our budget comes from congregation giving.
 - If we can use monies from the Block Grant this will change our situation, however with the installation of a new Presiding Bishop who wants to restructure how & where money is going this not a certainty.

- Bishop Brian believes that we are looking for a Ministry Developer in our next Bishop. Someone to be present, teaching, doing formation work and ultimately honoring where we are as a diocese.
- Look into changing the # of nominees required by the canons.
- Bishop Todd thinks we ask too much from Bishops nominees therefore suggested that we ask for a resume and ask a couple of questions that gives us insight into who they are. Afterwards we can acquire the rest of the information in an interview.
- Bishop Todd suggested the following rough timeline for calling a Bishop
 - Post profile/call for applications & recruitment – Jan 1
 - Review Applications – April thru May
 - Discernment – June
 - Meet & Greet – July & August
- Bishop Todd suggested calling Thad Bennet to come out of retirement to work with us again. This decision is for the Standing Committee to make.

Reports

- Diocesan Administrator – Jessica Krzewina submitted a written report
- Missioner for Reconciliation, Creation Care and Cong Ministry- Kim Fox submitted a written report
- UTO – Vanessa Strobel & Mary Massey submitted a written report
- Standing Committee – Mark Strobel submitted a written report
- NDEF – Beth Lipp submitted a written report

Previous Business

- Motion to approve the newly crafted Real Estate Policy as presented effective immediately.
 - *Moved by John Baird; Robert Hoekstra second*
 - *Motion passed*
- Disposition of All Saints, Valley City
 - Mark Strobel reported.
 - The Historical society is interested in the church at Valley City. Built in 1881 it is one of the oldest churches in ND.
 - The arrangement would be a custodial relationship where the Episcopal Diocese of ND would continue to own the building and the Historical Society would cover the costs for 2-3 years as a trial.
- White Shield rectory to be demolished.
- Continue to look at the size of Council and frequency of meetings. See below

Proposed 2025 Council Schedule (additional zoom or in person possible)

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| ▪ February 7-8 or 15-16 | (in person) | location TBD |
| ▪ April 11-12 or 25-26 | (in person) | location TBD |
| ▪ June 20-21 | (in-person) | location TBD |
| ▪ September 12-13 | (in-person) | location TBD |
| ▪ Nov. 14-15 or 21-22 | (in-person) | location TBD |

Bishop Brian thanked Bishop Ousley for his work with the Council, thanked Rachel for the wonderful All Saints hospitality and called on Chaplain John Floberg to sent us off with a song.
Meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Action Items

1. Find a new Communication Platform to replace Realm.
2. Sustainability Grant name needs to be changed in our records.
3. Create a Policy Manual for Council to use for reference.
4. Create a plan for how we move into a sustainable financial situation after the larger withdrawal from Trust & Endowment.
5. Look into changing the number of Bishop nominees.